



# The Hal yard

## A weekly newsletter for Virginia's Library Media Specialists September 17, 2004

### Charlie's chatter

My analogies of wind and sails have been severely tested by the weather that has created so much havoc here in Central Virginia. Yesterday, the rain closed roads again and we are faced with two additional storms within the next several days. Back in the pre-networking days, when computers began to be common in my high school library, we needed a way to identify them as to which computer ran what programs, so we named them after hurricanes. We used to joke that if the computers were down, it was a disaster in the library. Now, it isn't quite so funny.

I hope that most of you have begun the process of reaching out to your new and returning staff members letting them know about the programs and resources offered by your library media center. Don't forget to email them and let them know the activities that you are planning for their students. Keep a diary of successes and yes, even your not so winning events so that you can continue to provide the evidence of the libraries role in academic achievement.

I would also like to thank each person that responded to my SOS this week on the listserv. I needed the information immediately and you came through. Collaboration at its best!

### The Songs Inspired By Literature Project

#### **Overview**

In November 1999, Artists for Literacy's founder, Deborah Pardes, wrote a song inspired by Frank McCourt's memoir, *Angela's Ashes*. After performing it a few times, she realized that it was doing for the book what a movie trailer does for a film -- enticing people to learn more about the story. From that moment forward, Artists for Literacy has been collecting songs about books to help teachers engage their students.



## Books are scary; music's not

For people with low-level literacy, the look of a book can be daunting. When themes and / or characters from a book are first introduced through a song, teachers have overwhelmingly found that doors of interest are opened. Students discuss the song with ease and, by doing so, begin their critical thinking about the book. Soon, reading the book isn't so bad after all. <http://www.artistsforliteracy.org/sibl.html>

## Take a book with you

Richmond Public Schools invites you to take our *RAMP* to reading resources on the Internet! Let our colorful hang glider link you to a host of reading and literacy resources for teachers as well as for students and parents. We hope that you will enjoy browsing through our pages and will visit often to sample our collection of links. Be sure to check out "What's New" for the latest additions to our list and bookmark our page for future reference. Thank you for visiting and come back soon.  
<http://richmond.k12.va.us/readamillion/mainramp.htm>

## Banned Book Week

This is just a reminder that Banned Books Week 2004 is September 25 - October 2. I have posted some general information about libraries and their relationship to intellectual freedom and the freedom to read. I hope that in some way, no matter how small, you will be able to highlight this extremely important concept with your administrators, your teachers and staff, and even your students and their parents. These two concepts are at the very heart of libraries and our contribution to maintaining a free and democratic society.



Great ALA websites that have wonderful information!

1. The Banned Books Week page can be found at <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm>.
2. The books that have been most frequently challenged always make for a thought-provoking display for secondary students. This website has the lists of the 10 titles most frequently challenged in 2003, the 100 titles most frequently challenged since 1990, and authors most frequently challenged.  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/challengedbanned/challengedbanned.htm - mfcbl>
3. LM\_NET librarians have recommended special announcements during Banned Books Week that are in the form of "Did you Know?"
4. The week creates a wonderful opportunity to remind teachers and administrators about School Board approved selection policies and procedures that the school needs to follow when a parent challenges materials.
5. Ideas for activities can be found at <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/actionguide/actionguide.htm>.

REMEMBER: Even if you just did ONE of these suggested activities, you are supporting our professional commitment to Intellectual Freedom!  
These ideas generously provided by Bev Lammay, Intellectual Freedom chair - VEMA



*Get Caught Reading* is a nationwide campaign to remind people of all ages how much fun it is to read. Because of research indicating that early language experience actually stimulates a child's brain to grow and that reading to children gives them a huge advantage when they start school, we hope to encourage people of all ages to enjoy books and magazines and to share that pleasure with the young children in their lives.

<http://www.getcaughtreading.org/>

No Child Left Behind Newsletter -- September 15, 2004

**CLOSE-UP: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND—IMPROVING LITERACY THROUGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

School libraries are critical to meeting schools' instructional goals: they promote literacy by encouraging reading. However, based on the most recent findings in *The Status of Public and Private School Library Media Centers in the United States: 1999-2000*, a report from the National Center for Education Statistics, about 40 percent of public schools with library media centers did not have a full-time state-certified library media specialist. Only 32 percent of public schools with library media centers maintained a flexible schedule for class visits to the library, while just 50 percent of public school library media centers scheduled times before or after school when students could use the library independently.

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program is designed to improve the literacy skills of students by providing them with access to up-to-date school library materials; technologically advanced school library media centers; and well trained, professionally certified school library media specialists. This new program is one component of the U.S. Department of Education's commitment to dramatically improve student achievement by focusing available resources, including those of school library media centers, on reading achievement.

School library media centers can contribute to improved student achievement by providing instructional materials aligned to the curriculum; by collaborating with teachers, administrators and

#### QUOTE

"What happens when we fail to read? Well, we know the answer: the mind remains enslaved to ignorance. The great thoughts of the past are undiscovered. Our horizons remain fixed, limited, surrounded by unknown territory. Our imagination is unengaged. Life itself remains narrow and possibilities remain diminished. And we don't have as much fun, because reading is so pleasurable."

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, in his remarks announcing an Improving Literacy Through School Libraries grant from the Education Department to Detroit Public Schools, Aug. 11, 2004.

parents; and by extending their hours of operation beyond the school day.

The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program is a competitive one-year grant for school districts in which at least 20 percent of the students are from families with incomes below the poverty line. Last month, the Department awarded districts across the country 92 of these grants averaging \$200,000, nearly double the average amount of grants (\$130,000) awarded in 2002, the year of the program's start. For more information, visit [www.ed.gov/programs/lsl](http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl).